

# **Crooked Sticks**

“Living Large”, part 2, Insights from Acts 1:2-26  
Pastor Bob Johnson, April 30th, 2023

## **Two Questions About Him:**

- **Was he the wrong guy?**
- **Was he the right guy?**

## **Two Cautions For Us:**

- **avoid seeing Acts as P ...**
- **avoid seeing us w/ P ...**

## **Two Reasons For Hope:**

- **Jesus said that He would ...**  
(Matthew 16:18a)
- **Jesus said the gates would ...**  
(Matthew 16:18b)

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## **This Week's Discussion Guide**

Welcome to our second week of our 10 week study and discussion based on our current Sunday series at GPC called, "Living Large". In this series, we are slowly unpacking the Book of Acts. Each week we will read and reflect on a passage and discuss ways we can apply what we reflect on to our daily lives. Our last week in this small group season (before a summer break) will be the week of Sunday, June 25th.

It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships as part of our vision at GPC to raise up committed Christ followers in a healthy church community.

### **Getting Started:**

Each week, we typically start out with a few lighter questions to get us warmed up :).

Last Sunday we were encouraged to not idealize the individuals we read about in the Book of Acts. It is encouraging to recognize that back then and today, God delights to work in and through extremely normal people.

But ... speaking of idealizing, if you were to idealize someone ... who would it be?

Another way to ask the same thing, "Knowing they are not perfect, who do you still admire and are inspired by? Who would you like to be more like based on the character you see in their lives?"

In Acts 1, Matthias was chosen and Joseph Barsabbas wasn't. We all most likely had an experience where people were chosen for various teams or certain positions or even promotions.

Do you have a memory of not being chosen for something that deflated you a bit?

What were the details and what did you do to be able to move on from that difficult or at least unpleasant experience?

On a more positive note, when were you selected for something that encouraged you?

Why do you think you were chosen? What did you learn from being selected and probably being stretched a bit to do what was asked of you?

### **Reviewing and Reflecting on last Sunday's Passage:**

Let's read the main passage from last Sunday. (Acts 1:1-11)

After reading this passage and looking back on our notes from Sunday, was there a particular thought, verse or comment that caught your attention, encouraged you, challenged you or raised a question for you?

## Digging Deeper:

1. In the story we read in Acts 1, the apostles did not yet have the Holy Spirit to help them make their decision, but prayer did play a role. Today as followers of Jesus, we do have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help guide us. Let's read the following verses and share some insights from Jesus as our example as he prepared to make some key decisions.

Luke 6:12-16, Luke 22:39-44

Three keys to help us make wise choices in our decision making process are: applying Scripture, seeking wise counsel, and connecting with God through prayer. How have you seen any of these three help you make a wise decision?

What are some things that could help you pray through and seek God's guidance in your decision making (i.e. spend time in prayer, consistency, read Scripture, memorize and meditate on Scripture, pray with others, journal)?

Which one of the examples above do you want to try or continue to do?  
Is there a topic or area of your life that you want to be more engaged with God?  
(i.e. work, marriage, another certain relationship, parenting, finances)

2. An encouragement that is throughout the Bible is that God can draw straight lines with crooked sticks. Unfortunately, our culture today is fascinated with the mistakes of other people. From social media to reality TV, to the News, we are immersed in the personal (often negative aspects) lives of others.

With so much focus on other people's "stuff", there is less emphasis on our own issues. What consequences in the following verses could help us remember we all make mistakes and need to be slow to judge others?

Matthew 7:1-5, Matthew 12:36-37, James 4:11-12

What are some of the reasons for the tendency to be quick to judge other people?  
Can you think of a time when God used you or someone you know, in spite of any weaknesses, fears, or limitations you or they may have had?

3. If not careful, it would be easy to put the Apostle Paul on a pedestal so high that we can't relate to him. Although God worked in and through his life in powerful ways, it is encouraging to read how he saw himself. What insights can we identify that would encourage us to believe God can and does work in and through normal people?

2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:15-16, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

## Wrapping Up:

What is an application from what we read or discussed together that you would like to practice in the coming days? Is there anything that came up from this week's sermon or discussion that you would like prayer for? Is there anything else that you would like to express prayer for?